



- Session 2 -

## **Connecting Church and Home**

# **Select Learning**

# FACILITATOR GUIDE

## Welcome, Introductions and Opening Prayer

### Gathering Table

Include a cardboard box or tool box similar to the ones seen in the video. Add a candle, Bible, a cloth, and items your congregation gives as gifts at Baptism or for other milestone events.

### Introduce the Video – Guest Andrea Fieldhouse

*In these or similar words introduce the group to the theme for this session. The questions are a way of preparing and focusing minds and hearts on the content that the participants will experience in the video.*

In the video for Session 2, the focus is on a congregation that has found an effective way to connect the church with the home. The congregation has a clear purpose and vision for “taking faith home.” As you watch this segment, consider:

- Where are there sacred spaces in your home or life? What makes them sacred?
- What makes “God-talk” in the home challenging?
- What do you think are obstacles for a congregation equipping homes as the central place for nurturing faith?

### Watch the video

### Discussion – Faith in the Home

I. Andrea begins by reading a letter. In it, her grandma writes that Andrea is a gift from God and that she will be raised to be pleasing in God's sight. Before she was even aware, the baptismal promise had been made. *Invite participants to reflect on her words and share their responses to the following questions:*

- Who are the people in your life who have spoken of God to you? Blessed you? What do you remember about them? To whom have you spoken such words?
- Why are the words from Andrea's grandmother so important to Andrea?

Invite participants to read Joshua 24:14. *Call out a page number or location for the passage so everyone can easily find the text. Reflect on the questions below.*

II. Andrea talks about the book of Joshua and Joshua's words to the Israelites.

- What choice does Joshua set before the people?

- What did Joshua want for the Israelites?
- What do you want for your family and/or the families with whom you work?

*Invite the participants to consider and discuss the questions below. Place the group's answers and ideas on a whiteboard or large piece of newsprint.*

**III.** At the core of Family and Household Ministry are three significant questions:

- Why should a congregation concern themselves with faith nurture outside the church building or campus?
- Why don't many families/households "do" faith in the home?
- What are all the ways a congregation can equip parents and households to be centers for nurturing and practicing faith?

**IV.** *On a large sheet of paper or white board write the sentence below that appears in bold. Read to the group the paragraph that precedes it. Invite the participants to then study the sentence. Ask them to circle three words on their handout, that catch their attention. Ask them to share what they have circled and why.*

Building Bridges is a ministry based on the statement by David Lynn, "Don't expect families to do at home what they have not practiced first at church." It is a ministry meant to "bridge" or connect faith development at church and faith nurture in the home.

**We practice faith at church so we can intentionally live it at home and depend on it in our everyday lives.**

**V.** *Below are the pieces to a Building Bridge evening. Before directing attention to this list in the Participant Guide, ask people to name the piece or pieces for a Building Bridges experience that caught their attention in the video - and why.*

<b>Setting up altars</b>	<b>Creating sacred space</b>	<b>Candle-lighting</b>
<b>Opening prayers</b>	<b>Opening word</b>	<b>Intentional conversation</b>
<b>Devotional time</b>	<b>God's story</b>	<b>"HomeTime" instructions</b>
	<b>Prayer</b>	

**IV.** Andrea explained that every Building Bridges gathering is done in a "ritual" way. Ritual gives meaning when it is constant, repeated and simple. *Invite participants to explore:*

- Why is ritual important? (*Gives one a sense of identity and belonging. Provides security.*)
- What gives ritual meaning? (*Consistency, repetition, naming it, familiar items and routine.*)
- In what rituals do families already engage, in the congregation and at home?

## **Make It My Own – Take It Home**

*Check the Introduction to this Unit for an in-depth explanation for this section. Give people time to name next steps for each question. Invite people to share their responses with one other person or, if time, the entire group.*

This is the time to review and plan for next steps:

- 1. Celebrate:** Name those places in your ministry where bridges already connect church and home. Keep doing it!
- 2. Tweak:** What are the areas in your congregation or home that can simply be “tweaked” to be more intentional in nurturing faith?
- 3. Add:** What have you heard that is new to you? What is one new approach you may want to add to your congregation's and household ministry? When? How?

## **Closing**

*Use this time to thank everyone for participating. Invite people to the next session and give a brief preview. Be available for questions following the session. Close with prayer.*

## **Extend the Conversation**

- Read the Rite of Baptism for your denomination. How do you read and hear these words after this session?
- Name the rituals that define your denomination, congregation or household. What specific rituals or traditions do you appreciate in your faith community?

## **Accompanying Session 2.**

- Participant Guide • Bibliography & Resource

## **PARTICIPANT GUIDE**

### **Prepare to View the Video – Guest Andrea Fieldhouse**

- Where are the sacred spaces in your home or life? What makes them sacred?
- What makes “God-talk” in the home challenging?
- What do you think are the obstacles for a congregation equipping homes as the central place for the nurturing faith?

### **Discussion - Faith in the Home**

I. Andrea begins by reading a letter. In it her grandmother writes that Andrea is a gift from God and that she will be raised to be pleasing in God's sight. Before Andrea was even aware, the baptismal promise had been made. Reflect on her words. Share your responses to the following questions:

- Who are the people in your life who have spoken of God to you? Blessed you? What do you remember about them? To whom have you spoken such words?
- Why are the words from Andrea's grandmother so important to Andrea?

II. Andrea talks about the book of Joshua and Joshua's words to the Israelites in 24:14.

- What choice does Joshua set before the people?
- What did Joshua want for the Israelites?
- What do you want for your family and/or the families with whom you work?

III. Connecting Church and Home

At the core of Family and Household Ministry are three significant questions:

- Why should a congregation concern themselves with faith nurture outside the church building or campus?
- Why don't many families/households “do” faith in the home?
- What are all the ways a congregation can equip parents and households to be centers for nurturing and practicing faith?

IV. Study the following sentence then circle three words that stand out for you:

**We practice faith at church so we can intentionally live it at home and depend on it in our everyday lives.**

V. Which of these activities described in Building Bridges caught your attention? Why?

<b>Setting up altars</b>	<b>Creating sacred space</b>	<b>Candle-lighting</b>
<b>Opening prayers</b>	<b>Opening word</b>	<b>Intentional conversation</b>
<b>Devotional time</b>	<b>God's story</b>	<b>Prayer</b>
		<b>"HomeTime" instructions</b>

VI. Andrea explained that every Building Bridges gathering is done in a "ritual" way. Ritual transfers meaning when it is constant, repeated and simple.

Explore the following:

- Why is ritual important?
- What do you believe gives ritual meaning?
- In what rituals do families already engage – in the congregation and at home?

### **Make it My Own – Take It Home**

This is your time to review and plan for next steps:

1. **Celebrate:** Name those places in your ministry where bridges already connect church and home. Keep doing it!
2. **Tweak:** Where are the areas in your congregation and home that can simply be "tweaked" to be more intentional in nurturing faith?
3. **Add:** What have you heard that is new to you? What is one approach you may want to add to your congregation's and household ministry? When? How?

### **Closing**

#### **Extend the Conversation**

- Read the Rite of Baptism for your denomination. How do you read and hear these words after this session?
- Name the rituals that define your faith community. Your household.

### **Accompanying Session 2.**

Bibliography & Resources

## BIBLIOGRAPHY, REFERENCES and RESOURCES

Caldwell, Elizabeth. *Making a Home for Faith*. Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2000.

*Faith Inkubators*. <http://www.faithink.com/> Faith Inkubators goal is to support home-based faith education and spawn a home devotional movement across the church.

Garland, Diana S. Richmond. *Sacred Stories of Ordinary Families: Living the Faith in Daily Life*. The Families and Faith Series. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2003.

Morganthaler, Shirley, K. *Right from the Start: A Parent's Guide to the Young Child's Faith Development*. St Louis: Concordia Publishing, 2001.

Peters, Becky S. *Building Faith: One Child at a Time*. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing, 1997.

Staats, Linda. "Passing on Faith – Milestone to Milestone." *Lifelong Faith Journal*, Spring 2008. Lifelong Faith Associates. [www.lifelongfaith.com](http://www.lifelongfaith.com).  
View at [http://www.rmselfca.org/ministries/faith\\_formation/index.htm](http://www.rmselfca.org/ministries/faith_formation/index.htm)

*Taking Faith Home*. [http://store.vibrantfaith.org/category\\_s/46.htm](http://store.vibrantfaith.org/category_s/46.htm) A weekly bulletin insert based on the lectionary. Includes Four Key faith practices for individuals and households to nurture their faith all week long. Comes on a CD for all 52 weeks.

Wright, Wendy M. *Seasons of a Family's Life: Cultivating the Contemplative Spirit at Home*. The Families and Faith Series. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2003.

### Resource Suggested by Andrea Fieldhouse

Thompson, Marjorie J. *Family the Forming Center: A Vision of the Role of Family in Spiritual Formation*. Revised and expanded ed., Third printing 1999. Nashville: Upper Room Books, 1996.